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# USERS GUIDE TO LAND RECORDS

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT





U.S. Department of the Interior. As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.



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Since the formation of the United States of America, the creation and preservation of public land records have been vital and exacting tasks. Tract Books and General Land Office Plats were designed to record the transfer of land ownership from the Federal Government. Withdrawals, classifications, leases, permits, licenses, rights of way, patents with mineral reservations, and reconveyed interests, and other transactions have complicated the Federal land records keeping system.

In 1955, the Bureau of Land Management initiated a new land records system, which, over the years has become more complex with the inception of new laws. This booklet has been developed to help you use the present records system. The land record system has been designed in such a way that once the user becomes familiar with the basic rules, terminology, symbols, and annotations, it will be easy to determine the status of any area of land.

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# GLOSSARY

Surveying	The art of measuring and locating lines, angles, and elevations on the curved surface of the earth, and on the beds of bodies of water.
Initial Point	Is the intersection of the principal meridian and the base line from which the townships are numbered northerly and southerly and ranges are numbered easterly and westerly.
Principal Meridian	The true north-south line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Base Line	The true east-west line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Standard Parallels	Also called correction lines, are extended east and west from the principal meridian generally at intervals of 24 miles to the north and 24 miles to the south of the base line.
Guide Meridians	True north-south lines extended from points on the base line or standard parallels, east and/or west of the principal meridian, generally at intervals of 24 miles each.
Correctional Lines	See Standard Parallels.
Townships	A Tract of land contained within the boundaries of the north-south range lines and the east-west township lines containing approximately 36 square miles or twenty-three thousand and forty acres "as near as may be".
Range	A row or tier of townships lying east or west of the principal meridian and numbered successively to the east and to the west from the principal meridian.
Section	A tract of land, one mile square. Within a township containing 640 acres "as near as may be". Approximately one-thirtysixth of a township.
Allodial Title	Land held in absolute ownership. Both surface and mineral.
Township Lines	The east-west lines that run on a true parallel <sup>usually</sup> approximately six miles apart and make up the north and south boundaries of each township.

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Surveying	The art of measuring and bearing lines, angles, and distances on the surface of the earth, and on the beds of bodies of water.
Initial Point	Is the intersection of the principal meridian and the base line from which the townships are numbered northward and southward and ranges are numbered eastward and westward.
Principal Meridian	The true north-south line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Base Line	The true east-west line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Sectional Parallel	Also called correction line, are extended east and west from the principal meridian generally at intervals of 24 miles to the north and 24 miles to the south of the base line.
Guide Meridian	True north-south lines extended from points on the base line or sectional parallels east and/or west of the principal meridian, generally at intervals of 24 miles each.
Correction Line	See Sectional Parallel.
Township	A tract of land contained within the boundaries of the northwestern quarter town and the east-west township line containing approximately 36 square miles or 144 sections (36 sections and 160 acres "as near as may be").
Range	A row or line of townships lying east or west of the principal meridian and numbered successively on the east and on the west from the principal meridian.
Section	A tract of land, one mile square, which is a township containing 36 sections "as near as may be" approximately one-thirtieth of a township.
Allotted Time	Land sold in sections or townships, both containing one section.
Township Line	The east-west line that runs at a true parallel and approximately one mile apart from each other on the north and south boundaries of each township.

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Surveying	The art of measuring and locating lines, angles, and elevations on the surface of the earth, and on the beds of bridges of water.
True Point	Is the intersection of the principal meridian and the base line from which and to which are connected meridians and latitudes and ranges are numbered westward and eastward.
Principal Meridian	The true north-south line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Base Line	The true east-west line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Standard Meridians	Lines which, extending from the principal meridian east and west from the principal meridian generally at intervals of 24 miles to the north and 24 miles to the south of the base line.
Guide Meridian	Lines north-south line extending from points on the base line at intervals of 24 miles east and/or west of the principal meridian, generally at intervals of 24 miles each.
Correction Line	See Standard Meridian.
Preemption	A tract of land reserved under the provisions of the northwestern stage land law the east-west boundary line of which is approximately 16 miles wide or 16 miles wide and long under the act of 1864.
Range	A row or line of meridians lying east or west of the principal meridian and extending from the base line to the north and to the south from the principal meridian.
Section	A tract of land, one mile square, within a township containing 36 acres "as near as may be". Approximately one-eighth of a township.
Section Line	Land held in separate ownership, both surface and mineral.
Township Lines	The east-west lines that run on 3 true north-south approximately at intervals and divide the north and south boundaries of each township.



# GLOSSARY

Surveying	The art of measuring and locating lines, angles, and elevations on the curved surface of the earth, and on the beds of bodies of water.
Initial Point	Is the intersection of the principal meridian and the base line from which the townships are numbered northerly and southerly and ranges are numbered easterly and westerly.
Principal Meridian	The true north-south line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Base Line	The true east-west line extending from an initial point in both directions.
Standard Parallels	Also called correction lines, are extended east and west from the principal meridian generally at intervals of 24 miles to the north and 24 miles to the south of the base line.
Guide Meridians	True north-south lines extended from points on the base line or standard parallels, east and/or west of the principal meridian, generally at intervals of 24 miles each.
Correctional Lines	See Standard Parallels.
Townships	A Tract of land contained within the boundaries of the north-south range lines and the east-west township lines containing approximately 36 square miles or twenty-three thousand and forty acres "as near as may be".
Range	A row or tier of townships lying east or west of the principal meridian and numbered successively to the east and to the west from the principal meridian.
Section	A tract of land, one mile square. Within a township containing 640 acres "as near as may be". Approximately one-thirtysixth of a township.
Allodial Title	Land held in absolute ownership. Both surface and mineral.
Township Lines	The east-west lines that <sup>usually</sup> run on a true parallel approximately six miles apart and make up the north and south boundaries of each township.



The act of measuring and locating lines  
higher and elevation on the corner corners  
of the earth and on the beds of bodies of  
water

Surveying

Is the intersection of the physical meridians  
and the base line from which the township  
are numbered northward and southward and  
ranging are numbered eastward and westward.

Initial Point

The true north-south line extending from an  
initial point in both directions.

Principal Meridian

The true east-west line extending from an  
initial point in both directions.

Base Line

Also called correction line, are measured  
from and west from the principal meridian  
generally at intervals of 36 miles to the north  
and 36 miles to the south of the base line.

Standard Parallel

The north-south line extended from section  
on the base line to standard parallel, and  
section west of the principal meridian, gen-  
erally at intervals of 36 miles each.

Guide Meridian

See Standard Parallel.

Correction Line

A tract of land contained within the bound-  
aries of the north-south range line and the  
east-west township line containing approx-  
imately 36 square miles or twenty-four thou-  
sand and forty acres "as near as may be."

Township

A row or belt of townships lying east or  
west of the principal meridian and north-  
ward or southward of the base line and to the  
west from the principal meridian.

Range

A tract of land, one mile square. Within  
a township containing odd acres "as near  
as may be." Approximately one-thirtieth  
of a township.

Section

Land held in absolute ownership. Both sur-  
face and mineral.

Absolute Title

The east-west line that runs on a true paral-  
lel approximately six miles apart and make  
up the north and south boundaries of each  
township.

Township Lines

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## Range Lines

True north-south lines approximately six miles apart either east and/or west of the Principal Meridian and of each other that make up the east and west boundaries of each township.

## Section Lines

North-south and east-west lines that are respectively parallel to and at intervals of one mile from the eastern and southern boundaries of each township.

## Aliquot Parts

Parcels of land consisting of half section quarter-sections or any half or quarter of further like subdivision thereof into equal halves or quarters.

## Lots

Fractional or odd shaped tracts of land not generally describable by aliquot parts.

## "As near as may be"

The area within a township or section in the rectangular system of survey, that may contain more or less than the standard acreage. The variance is inherent in the survey system because of the need for a rapid and economical survey of the public lands.

## Tract

An expanse of land of any size. When surveyed, most townships contain 36 sections. Lands which do not, for some reason, fall under regular survey methods especially in resurveys are tracted beginning with tract no. 37.

## Township Plat

In Cadastral Surveying, a map constructed from the surveyors field notes which in rectangular survey most commonly contains 36 sections of approximately one square mile each. Title records are kept on a composite map of all Cadastral Surveys in a township which is called the Master Title Plat or MTP.

## Protraction

The word means extension prolongation. An example of its use would be the representation on paper of the fractional lots in the north and west tiers of sections within a township. These lines are not monumented on the ground. They are shown on the plat as protractions (dashed lines) indicating that they were not on in the field. The distances given are parenthetical until they are actually surveyed.

## Protraction Diagram

It is prepared for the purpose of describing unsurveyed land areas. The diagram is approved for the Director by the Chief, Division of Cadastral Survey, and filed in the respective state offices of the BLM - after public notice in the Federal Register.



## AREA

In some cases, a statement of the total area follows the description. If the lands described are entirely surveyed, the actual acreage as shown upon the official plats of survey should be used. Where unsurveyed land is included, the approximate area should be given in even acres.

The area (or areas) described aggregates (or aggregate) \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

Where both public and nonpublic lands are included, the following statement should be used:

The areas described, including both public and nonpublic lands, aggregate \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

A historical map of the Ohio River region, showing the river's course and the locations of various towns and cities. The map is oriented with North at the top. The Ohio River is depicted as a winding line with multiple parallel lines representing the river's width. Towns and cities are marked with dots and labeled. The map is divided into sections by a grid of lines. The text "OHIO RIVER" is written along the river's course. The map is titled "A MAP OF THE OHIO RIVER" at the top.



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addressed to N. V. Esq  
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First rectangular survey of Northwest Territory in 1776 by surveyor  
Absalom Martin

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# FOR DESCRIPTIONS OF TRACTS OF LAND PREFERRED ORDER

The preferred order of listing is to begin with the lowest-numbered section in each township giving first the lot numbers in order, then the subdivisions within each quarter section, in the order NE, then the NW, SW, and SE; if parts of the quarter sections are to be described, the same order is to be observed. If several townships are included, the primary order is determined by the range number, beginning with the lowest and within each range by the township numbers also beginning with the lowest.

Where townships north and south of the base line or east and west of the reference meridian or both are involved, the order of listing is optional but usually follows the order given above; namely, first those north and east of the initial point, followed by those north and west, south and west, and south and east in the order named.

In some cases, a statement of the total area follows the description. If the lands described are entirely surveyed, the actual acreage as shown upon the official plats of survey should be used. Where unsurveyed land is included, the approximate area should be given in even acres.

Descriptions containing public land only should carry a statement reading as follows:

The area (or areas) described aggregates (or aggregate) \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

Where both public and nonpublic lands are included, the following statement should be used:

The areas described, including both public and nonpublic lands, aggregate \_\_\_\_\_ acres.

Illustrations, on the following page are examples of order of description for different tracts of land within a section. Practice reading these descriptions.



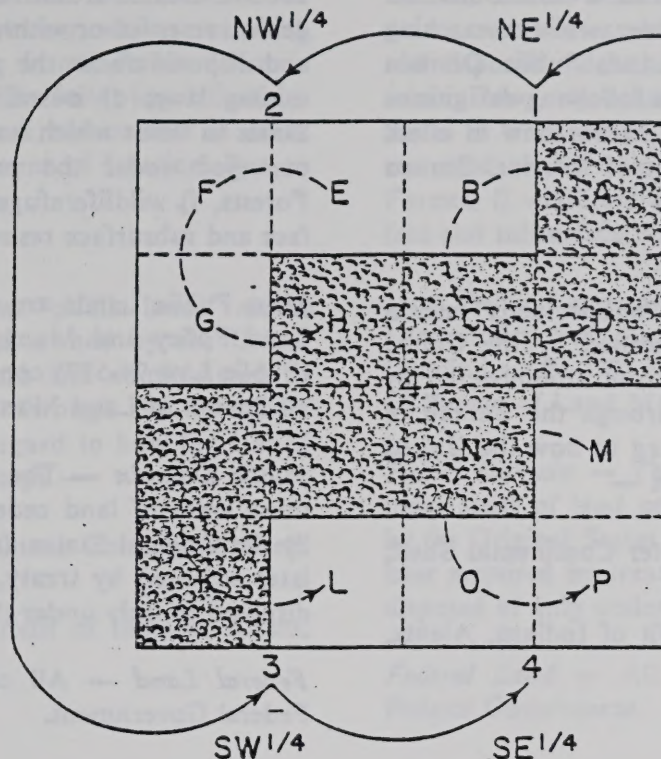
First rectangular survey of Northwest Territory in 1786 by surveyor  
Absalom Martin

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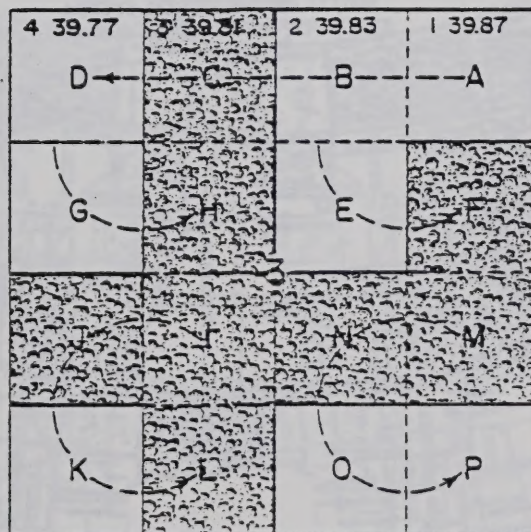


# EXAMPLES OF ORDER OF DESCRIPTION



T. 6N. R. 8E. SLM  
Sec. 14,

1. (A) NE  $\frac{1}{4}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,
2. (H) SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  NW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,
3. (I, J) N  $\frac{1}{2}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  
(K) SW  $\frac{1}{4}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,
4. and (N) NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$



## Exception:

Always describe any lots first, then use the counter clockwise rule to describe the rest of the lands in the section.

T. 5N. R. 6W. SLM  
Sec. 3,

- (C) Lot 3
- (F) SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  NE  $\frac{1}{4}$
- (H) SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  NW  $\frac{1}{4}$
- (I, J) N  $\frac{1}{2}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$
- (L) SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  SW  $\frac{1}{4}$
- and (M, N) N  $\frac{1}{2}$  SE  $\frac{1}{4}$

(SLM=Salt Lake Meridian)



# DEFINITION OF PUBLIC LANDS

## Public Land

Throughout the wide scope of land laws, actions and transactions encountered by the user, while researching the records, the terms Public Land, Public Domain and Federal Land are found. The following definitions will clarify the usage of these names now in effect by the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management:

**Public Lands** — (1) The term "public lands" means any land and interest in land owned by the United States within the several States and administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management, without regard to how the United States acquired ownership, except —

- (a) lands located on the Outer Continental Shelf, and
- (b) lands held for the benefit of Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos.

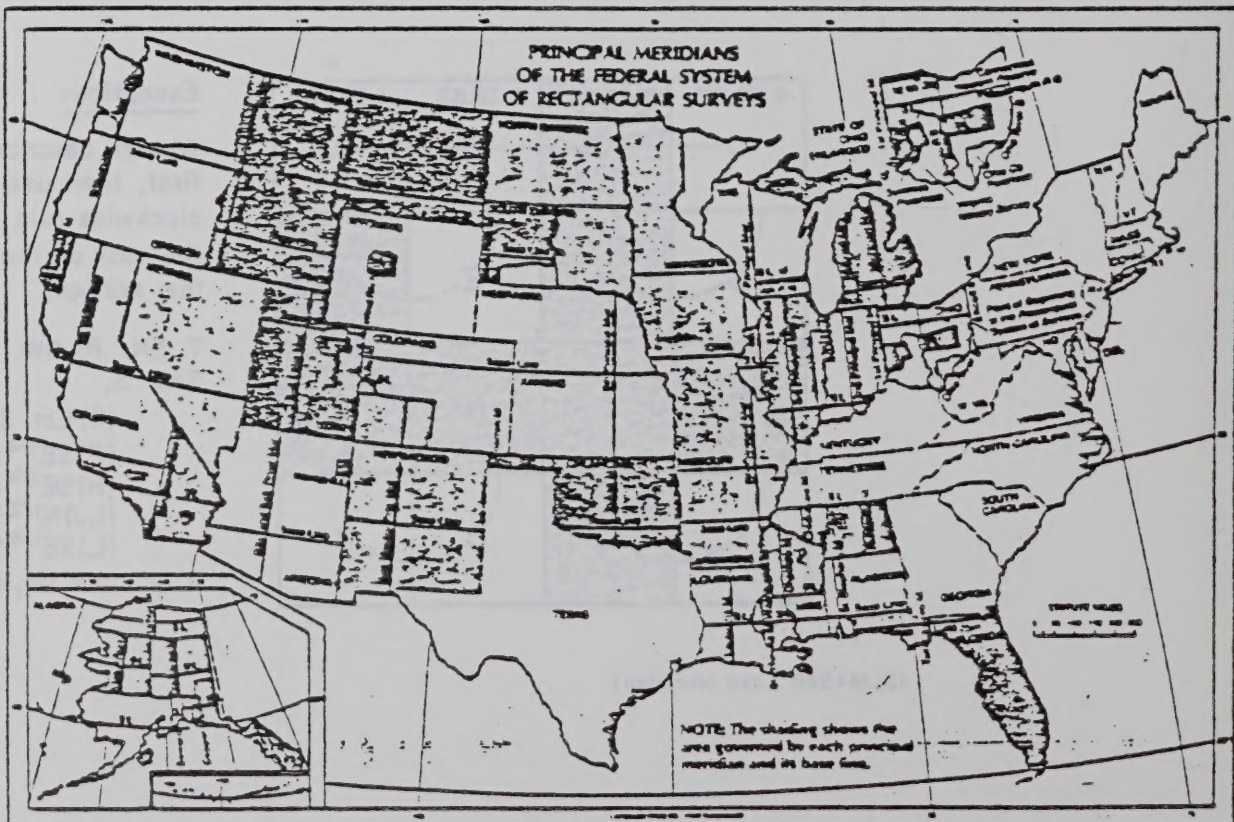
Sec 103(c)43 USC 1702.

(2) Includes a) the remaining public domain of the United States, b) reservations, other than Indian reservations, created from the public domain, c) lands withdrawn, reserved or withheld from private appropriation and disposal under the public land laws, including the mining laws, d) outstanding interests of the United States in lands which have been patented or otherwise conveyed under the public land laws, e) National Forests, f) wildlife refuges and ranges, and g) the surface and subsurface resources of all such lands.

Most Public Lands are now governed by The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of Oct. 21, 1976, (Public Law 94-579) copies of which are available from all Bureau of Land Management Offices.

**Public Domain** — The term applied to any or all of those areas of land ceded to the Federal Government by the Original States and to such other lands as were later acquired by treaty, purchase or cession, and are disposed of only under the authority of Congress.

**Federal Land** — All classes of land owned by the Federal Government.



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## Public Land

(2) Includes a) the remaining public domain of the United States, b) reservations, other than Indian reservations, created from the public domain, c) lands withdrawn, reserved or withheld from private appropriation and disposal under the public land laws, including the mining laws, d) outstanding interests of the United States in lands which have been patented or otherwise conveyed under the public land laws, e) National Forests, f) wildlife refuges and ranges, and g) the surface and subsurface resources of all such lands.

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# BASIC PUBLIC RECORDS USED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT FOR RECORDING AND DISPLAYING LAND STATUS DOCUMENTS

**CADASTRAL SURVEYS** — Title transfers of unsurveyed public lands to private ownership cannot be made until an approved survey has been completed, approved, and filed in the appropriate BLM State Office.

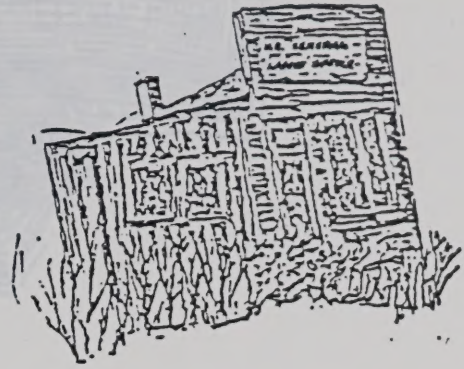
After a request for a cadastral survey has been approved, research of the area and plans of survey are made. The area is then surveyed and survey monuments are placed on the ground. The surveyor must keep notes of how the survey was performed.



The survey plat or plats are drawn from the surveyor's notes. The completed survey plats are then submitted to the Washington office for approval. When these records are approved, copies are placed in the appropriate Bureau of Land Management State Office for public and official use.

These survey notes and plats are available for public viewing. Copies can be purchased from the Bureau of Land Management state office having jurisdiction over the state records in which you may have an interest in:

**TRACT BOOK** — The tract book is the official record used in the old land offices and is still used in the Eastern States Office, and some other state offices. It contains title conveyances (patents), entries, withdrawals, uses and leases on the public domain. The book is broken down by Meridian, Township, Range, Section and Tract. Sections and tracts are listed in numerical order (usually three or four to a page). These books are still available to the public in some state offices or they are recorded on microfilm for public use.



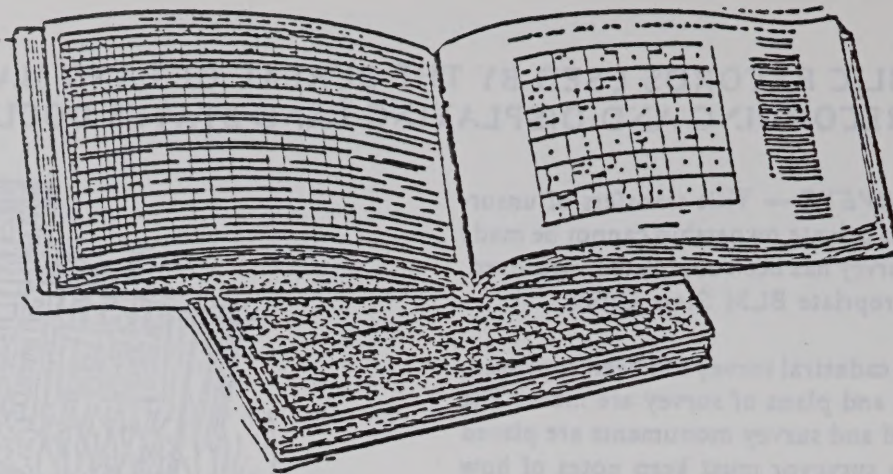
**GENERAL LAND OFFICE (GLO) PLATS** — These are copies of the official survey plats for a given Township. Entries, patents, withdrawals, classifications were free hand plotted on the areas described in the documents. They were usually color coded and delineated with the document identification. After many years of use, the plats usually became so cluttered with notations, and soiled or torn that they became very difficult to read and interpret. These plats depicting status have been replaced with the Master Title Plats. In most instances the GLO plats have been retired to Regional and National Archives Records Centers.

**MISCELLANEOUS DOCUMENT INDEX** — In each state office there is an index of all orders affecting disposal or use of unidentified lands withdrawn for classification, minerals, water and/or other public purposes. In most states the index includes Indian treaties, agreements and cessions. All the documents are recorded on microfilm aperture cards which can be viewed on microfilm readers in each state office. Copies may be purchased at a nominal cost.

**MASTER TITLE PLAT (MTP)** — The Master Title Plat is based on a composite of the official survey plat or plats of a given township. If the township is unsurveyed, the MTP is founded on the basic protraction diagram, which is a mathematically constructed diagram which represents the depicted area. The *Master Title Plat must not be construed as an official survey plat*. It illustrates title information by the use of various weights (thickness) and types of lines and shadings. The column at the right side of the plat should be read first to determine any information not delineated or annotated on the plat which will affect the township.

The MTP shows the land which has been patented (deeded) to private ownership, or otherwise transferred from Federal ownership, the patent numbers, and the





reservations to the United States as stated in the patent. The absence of such information would signify the land is still vacant Federal land, usually referred to as public land. Withdrawals, right of ways, national forests, wildlife refuges, classifications, and other reservations are also shown. All current applications and entries for title to or for use of public lands and resources are also shown. These filings are identified by serial numbers. All documents affecting public land should be read to determine the actual status of the land being researched. Lands which have been patented from and then gained back by the United States by donation, purchase, or condemnation are shown when such information is available and are referred to as acquired lands.

**HISTORICAL INDEX (HI)** — The Historical Index is a chronological narrative of all final past and present actions which affect the use of, or title to, public lands and resources, therefore it is simplest to read the HI pages from the bottom (most recent entry) up. Although it can be used to check title, it was not designed for that purpose, and it is not necessary for use in making title determinations. The primary value is its adaptability for abstract work. It also contains notations which may elaborate on the information on the MTP. Withdrawals are the only applications that are recorded on the HI. Many applications do not segregate land from other uses or applications and do not appear on the historical index. Unsuccessful applications such as color of title, or swamp and overflow, can be added to the HI although they do not change the status of the land. Work done on these applications may have value; therefore, it could be important to read these documents when the case is closed.

**USE PLATS** — Use plats are used to show mineral leases and permits and applications for mineral leases and permits. They are copies of MT plats with the designation "MT" replaced by "OG" (for oil and gas), "Coal", etc. When a township does not contain a given type of mineral leases or permits, or applications, it will not have that type use plat. In this case use the MT plat to identify and determine the availability of Federally-owned leasable mineral rights.

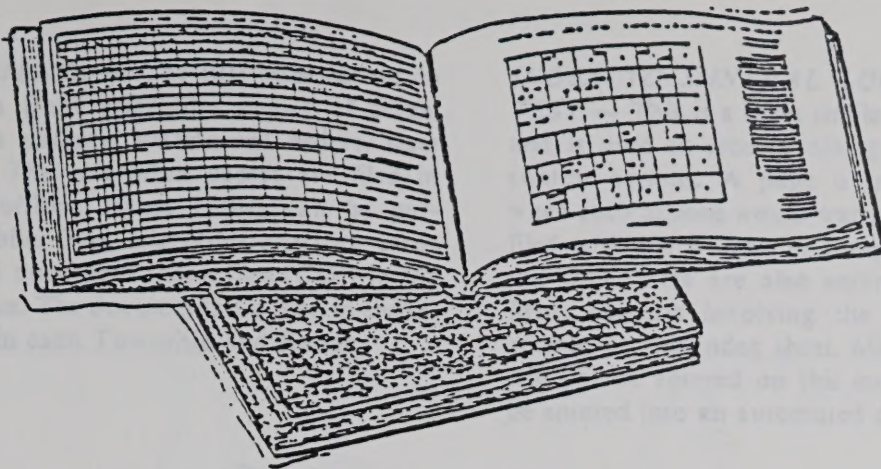
**SERIAL REGISTER** — Since 1908 all applications and claims filed with the Bureau of Land Management have been assigned serial numbers. The serial number is the key to the BLM's record system. The serial pages for each individual application or claim reflect the applicant's name and current address, type of claim and land description in addition to the current status or final disposition of that particular application or claim. Serial registers are therefore a chronological, as well as numerical, listing of all case files handled in a given state.

The serial number is shown on the applicable Master Title Plats or Use Plats and the Historical Indices. When entries or claims are patented, the patent number is placed on the MTP and the serial number is removed. The HI contains the necessary cross references from patent to serial number.

A separate set of serial books is maintained for mining claims recorded with the Bureau in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. In addition to the alphabetical state prefix the mining claim serial number will also be identified with a (MC) mining claim. This is true for each state, except Alaska, which uses the normal serial number prefix.

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reservations to the United States as stated in the patent. The absence of such information would signify the land is still vacant Federal land, usually referred to as public land. Withdrawals, right of ways, national forests, wildlife refuges, classifications, and other reservations are also shown. All current applications and entries for title to or for use of public lands and resources are also shown. These filings are identified by serial numbers. All documents affecting public land should be read to determine the actual status of the land being researched. Lands which have been patented from and then gained back by the United States by donation, purchase, or condemnation are shown when such information is available and are referred to as acquired lands.

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**SERIAL REGISTER** — Since 1908 all applications and claims filed with the Bureau of Land Management have been assigned serial numbers. The serial number is the key to the BLM's record system. The serial pages for each individual application or claim reflect the applicant's name and current address, type of claim and land description in addition to the current status or final disposition of that particular application or claim. Serial registers are therefore a chronological, as well as numerical, listing of all case files handled in a given state.

The serial number is shown on the applicable Master Title Plats or Use Plats and the Historical Indices. When entries or claims are patented, the patent number is placed on the MTP and the serial number is removed. The HI contains the necessary cross references from patent to serial number.

A separate set of serial books is maintained for mining claims recorded with the Bureau in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. In addition to the alphabetical state prefix the mining claim serial number will also be identified with a (MC) mining claim. This is true for each state, except Alaska, which uses the normal serial number prefix.

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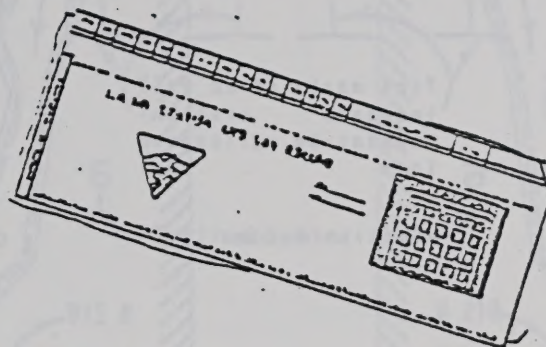






**SOURCE DOCUMENTS** — The title information on the MTP is taken from microfilm copies of actual documents such as patents, withdrawal orders, state selection list, etc. The microfilm copies are filed in the various state offices. Paper copies can be purchased by the public. The microfilm aperture cards are filed in control document index files (CDI) in the respective state office. The documents are filed in chronological order within each Township and Range.

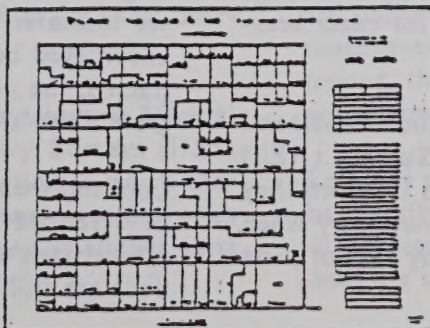
**INDEX TO MINERAL LOCATIONS AND CONTEST** — This is a form similar to the historical index, and is used to record mining claims, litigations, and contest actions. A page is made for each township when such actions would warrant its use. Mining claims filed with the Bureau in compliance with PL 359 and the O&C Acts are also entered on this index sheet. Most contests involving the Bureau would also be entered on this index sheet. Mining Claims Act of 1976 will not be entered on this index sheet since they will be entered into an automated data processing system.



## PROCEDURES FOR USING THE MASTER TITLE AND USE PLATS

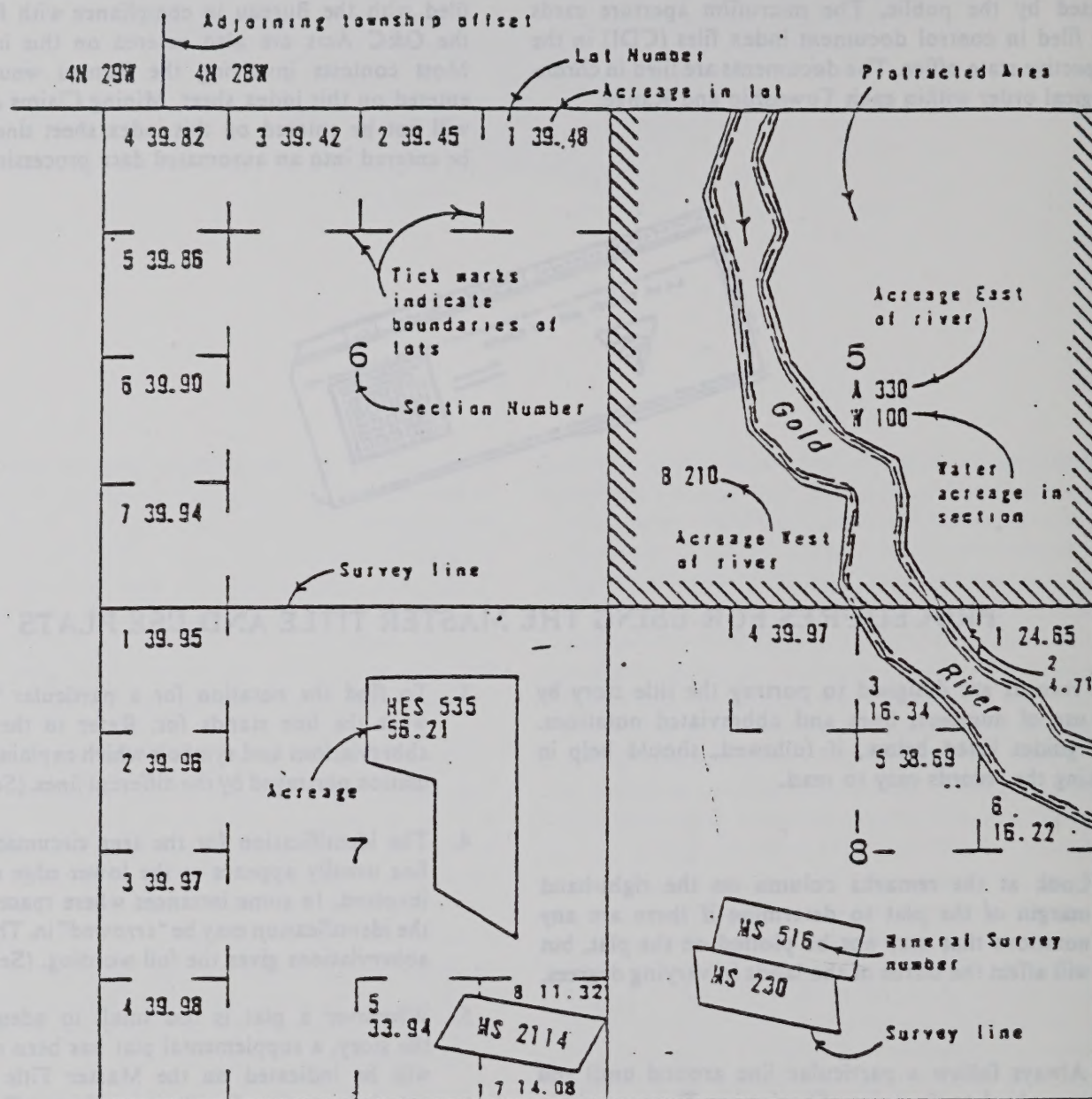
The records are designed to portray the title story by the use of numbers, lines and abbreviated notations. The guides listed below, if followed, should help in making the records easy to read.

1. Look at the remarks column on the right-hand margin of the plat to determine if there are any notations that may not be plotted on the plat, but will affect the status of the lands in varying degrees.
2. Always follow a particular line around until you come back to the point of beginning. The area within the bounds of the line is the land affected.
3. To find the notation for a particular line, know what the line stands for. Refer to the legend of abbreviations and symbols which explains the information portrayed by the different lines. (See page 26)
4. The identification for the area circumscribed by a line usually appears at the lower edge of the area involved. In some instances where space is limited, the identification may be "arrowed" in. The legend of abbreviations gives the full wording. (See page 26)
5. Whenever a plat is too small to adequately tell the story, a supplemental plat has been made. This will be indicated on the Master Title Plat. The title information for those sections will be shown only on the supplemental plat.





# CADASTRAL SURVEY DATA



Cadastral survey information shown on the Master Title Plat is for general information and reference only. Refer to Official Cadastral Survey Plat for exact bearing and distance information.

Areas encompassed in Special Surveys such as Mineral Surveys (MS) and Homestead Entry Surveys (HES) are no longer a legal part of the section in which they are located. A special Survey becomes necessary when the lands involved cannot be described by aliquot parts of a section. See sections 7 and 8.

Much of the public land is still unsurveyed, protraction diagrams have been made for those areas. These areas are indicated by hachure marks on the inside of the unsurveyed boundary. When entire townships are protracted, the plat map will be labeled "Protraction Diagram", and are not hachured.

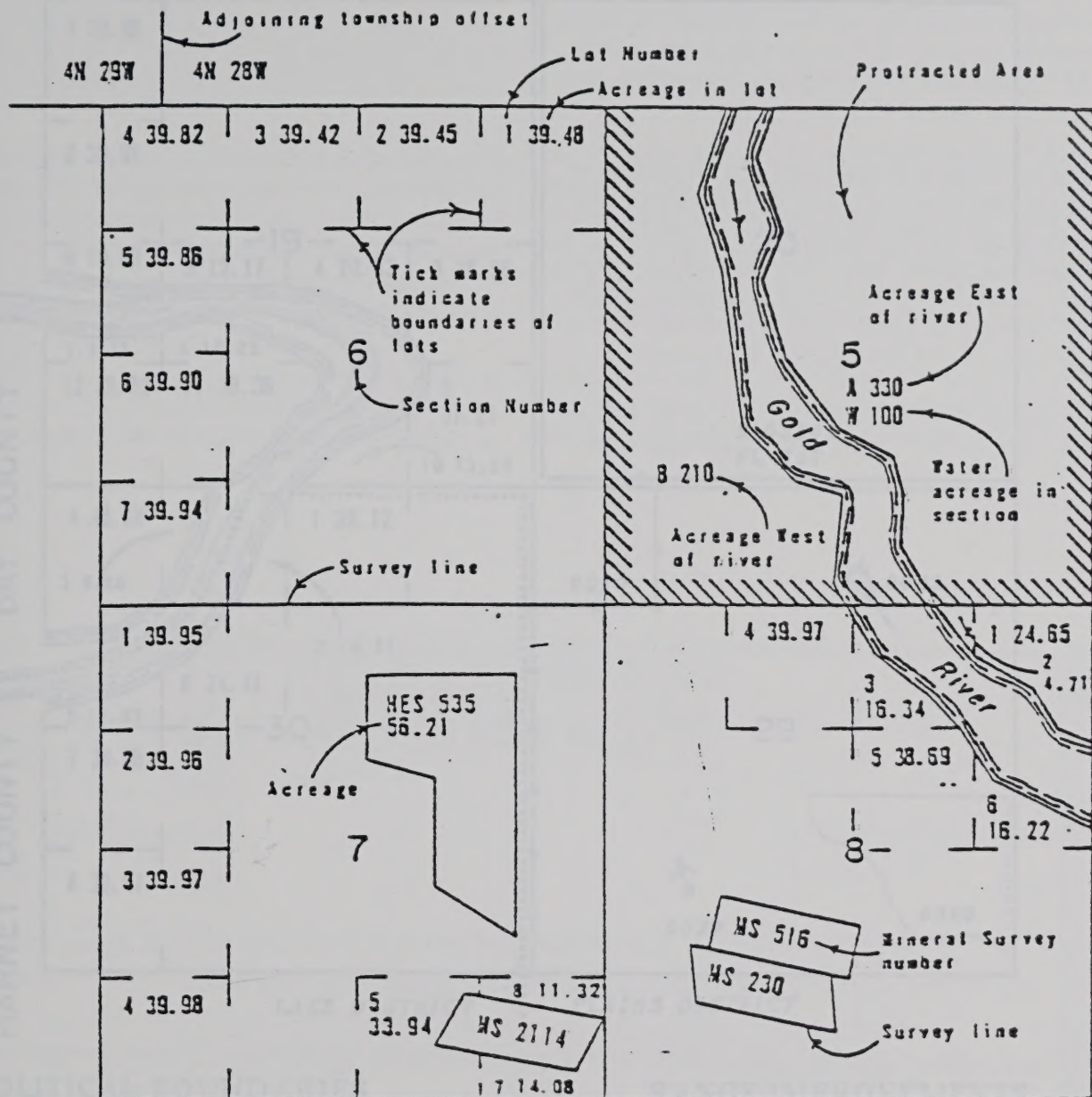
Lots and their acreage are shown when an area cannot be described by aliquot parts. Lots are mathematical subdivisions of a section. Unlotted areas in lotted sections are still described by aliquot parts.

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# CADASTRAL SURVEY DATA

POLITICAL BOUNDARIES  
AND  
RANGE IMPROVEMENTS



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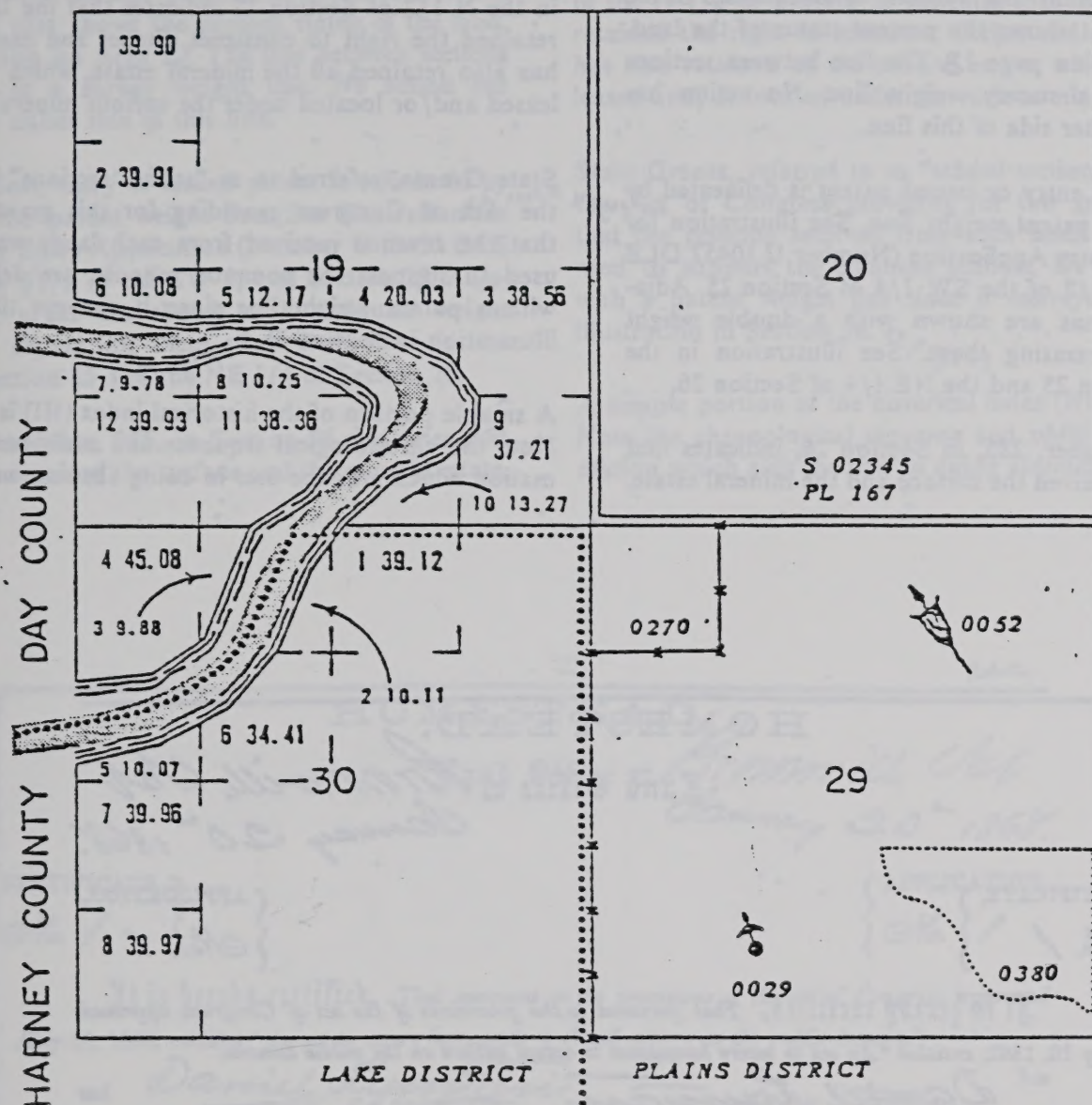
Lots and their acreage are shown when an area cannot be described by aliquot parts. Lots are mathematical subdivisions of a section. Unlotted areas in lotted sections are still described by aliquot parts.







# POLITICAL BOUNDARIES AND RANGE IMPROVEMENTS



## POLITICAL BOUNDARIES

**County Boundaries:** When a county embraces a complete township, the name of the county will be centered at the top of the MTP just under the township and range designation. When more than one county boundary invades a township, the county line is shown as a heavy shaded line. The county names are shown along the border of MTP where the county line intersects the exterior boundary.

**District Boundaries:** Those states that put district boundaries on the land status records, show them in the same manner that the county boundaries are displayed. The symbol for the district line is a series of medium size dots. (See illustration).

## RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

Range Improvement symbols, as shown in Section 29 of the illustration, appear only on land under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management or on private lands with easements. As range improvements do not affect status, all state offices do not display them on the Master Title Plat.

Political boundaries and Range Improvements are not shown on the Historical Indexes.







A land patent is a document which conveys to the patentee legal title to public lands, and/or mineral resources.

The use of different line weights, or thicknesses of the line, on the plat shows the present status of the land. See illustration on page 12. The line between sections 26 and 35 is a survey weight line. No action has occurred on either side of this line.

An application, entry or issued patent is delineated by the use of the patent weight line. See illustration for Desert Land Entry Application (Number U 10457 DLE Apln) in the S 1/2 of the SW 1/4 of Section 25. Adjacent patent areas are shown with a double weight patent line separating them. See illustration in the N 1/2 of Section 25 and the NE 1/4 of Section 26.

The patent number, 285, in Section 26, indicates that the patentee received the surface and the mineral estate,

or Allodial title, as no reservations are included with the annotation.

The reservations shown under the patent annotation in the N 1/2 of Section 25 indicates that the U.S. has retained the right to construct ditches and canals and has also retained all the mineral estate, which may be leased and/or located under the various mineral acts.

State Grants, referred to as "school sections" because the Act of Congress providing for this grant stated that the revenue received from such lands was to be used to support the common schools, are delineated with a patent weight line since it conveys title. See illustration in Section 36.

A sample portion of the historical index (HI) is shown. Note the chronological sequence and additional information which aids the user in doing abstract work.

# HOMESTEAD.

Land Office at

*Brownville Neb*  
*January 20<sup>th</sup> 1868.*

CERTIFICATE,

*No. 1*

APPLICATION,

*No. 1*

It is hereby certified, That pursuant to the provisions of the act of Congress, approved May 20, 1862, entitled "An act to secure homesteads to actual settlers on the public domain,"

*Daniel Kruman* has made payment in full for *62 1/2* ~~acres~~ *of NW 1/4 SW 1/4 of T 6 N 14 E* of Section *Joint Sec (26)* in Township *four 41 N* of Range *five (5) E* containing *160* acres.

Now, therefore, be it known, That on presentation of this Certificate to the COMMISSIONER OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE, the said *Daniel Kruman* shall be entitled to a Patent for the Tract of Land above described.

*Henry M. Atkinson* Register

Certificate for patent of The Homestead National Monument  
Beatrice, Nebraska.

680-161  
#M953







## PATENTS

The diagram is a 2x2 grid with various labels and arrows pointing to specific elements:

- Top Left:**
  - Single patent line (arrow points to the vertical line between columns)
  - Double patent line (arrow points to the vertical line between columns)
  - Patent Number 285 (arrow points to the number 285)
  - 26 (at the bottom left of the grid)
- Top Right:**
  - Patent Number 101311 (arrow points to the number 101311)
  - D/C All Min (arrow points to the text "D/C All Min")
  - 25 (at the bottom right of the grid)
  - Reservations to US: Ditches & canals, All Minerals (text block with an arrow pointing to the "D/C All Min" text)
- Bottom Left:**
  - Serial Number (arrow points to the text "U 10457")
  - Type of application. The abbreviation "Apln" will be removed when entry is allowed. (arrow points to the text "DLE Apln")
  - Survey line (arrow points to the horizontal line between rows)
  - 35 (at the bottom left of the grid)
  - Patent Numbering System since 1964 (text block)
  - State No. (arrow points to the number 43)
  - Fiscal Year (arrow points to the number 64)
  - Patent No. starts with No. 0001 each year (arrow points to the number 0729)
  - 43-64-0729 (the full patent number)
  - D/C (at the bottom left of the grid)
- Bottom Right:**
  - 36 (at the bottom right of the grid)
  - Title information is centered in the lowest portion of delineated area whenever space permits. (text block with an arrow pointing to the text "SG 7/1/1882")
  - SG 7/1/1882 (at the bottom right of the grid)

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A withdrawal (reserve) is an action which restricts the use and disposal of lands (sometimes minerals) and holds them for a specific purpose. (See Illustration on page 14)

14

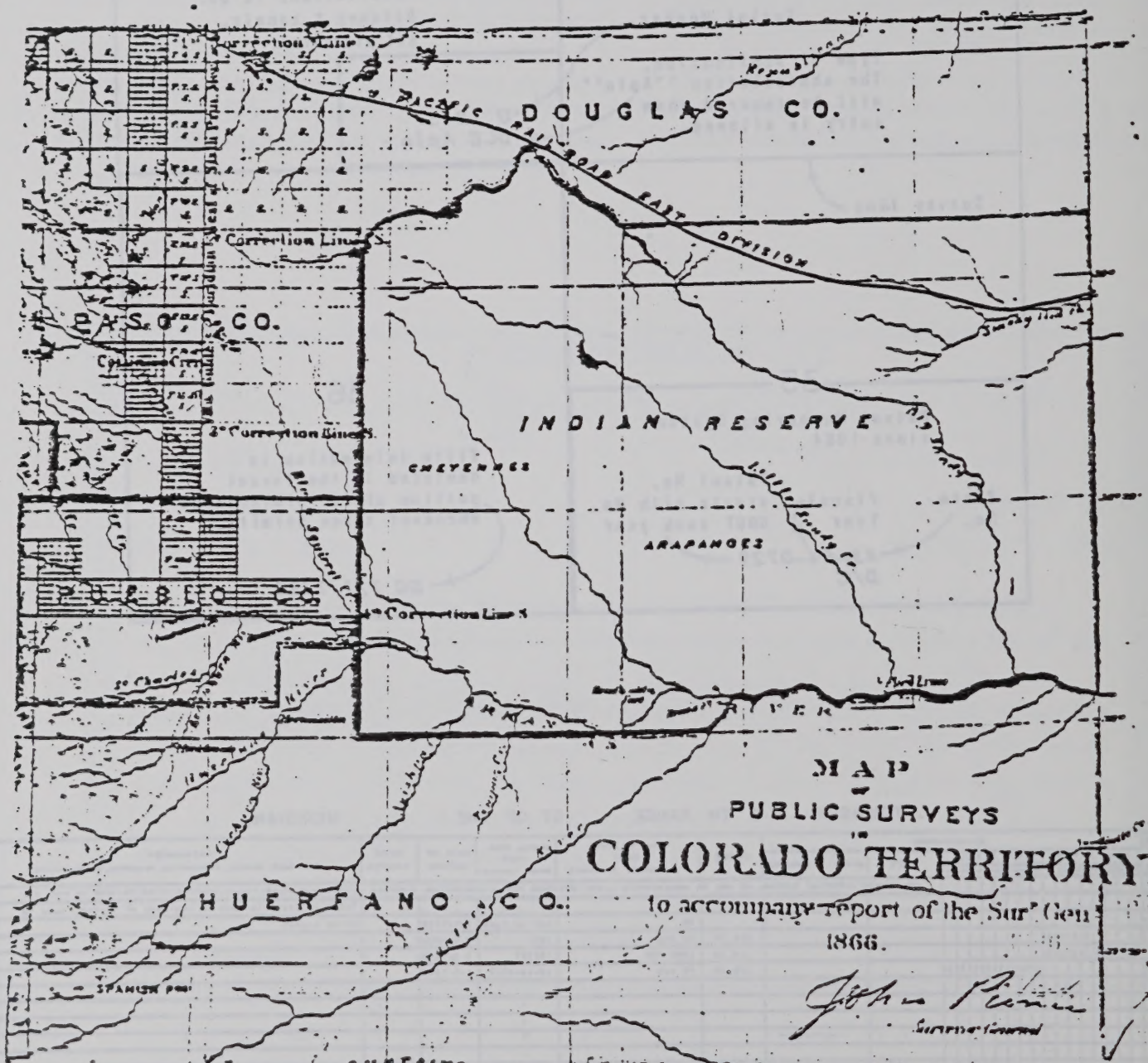
A classification indicates public lands are valuable or suitable for a specific use or purpose. A classification usually restricts the use of the land and possibly the minerals.

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Withdrawals, Reserves and Classifications are delineated by a \_\_\_\_ line. The annotation identifies the action document and the purpose of the withdrawal. Often the date shown is the date of the last action. Check the Historical Index if the original effective date is important.

Withdrawals or classifications covering the entire township are not outlined, but are posted in the column on the right hand side of the plat. It is a good practice to always check this column first when reading the plats.

Multiple withdrawals on the same tract of land are shown with only one delineation line and the identifying annotations stacked inside the line.



Portion of the map produced for the Surveyor General's report in 1866

680  
#14537



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14

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Portion of the map produced for the Surveyor General's report in 1866

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# WITHDRAWALS, RESERVES AND CLASSIFICATIONS

<p>EO 7577 Wdl Mangold NWR SO 11/14/1913 Wdl Iron Canyon Recl Proj</p> <p>29</p> <p>Identification of withdrawal orders</p>	<p>Wdl, Res &amp; CI line</p> <p>28</p>
<p>32</p> <p>Act of Cong 11/8/1923 Wdl Naval Pet Res No 3</p>	<p>33</p> <p>Serial No. R 3342 BLM O CI Mult Use NOL</p>

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TOWNSHIP				ACRES	CLASS OF LAND	SERIAL FILE NO.	DATE OF ACTION	DATE POSTED	REMARKS
10 1/4	10 1/2	10 3/4	11						
29	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4		50 000 Iron Canyon				
29	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4		Recl Proj (1st Phase)		8/7/1918		
32	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4		Act of Cong 1913 Naval				
32	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4		Per Sec No 3		8/7/1923		
29	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4		50 000 Mangold NWR	1587	8/7/1935		
29	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4	46 278					All unappropriated public land, Sage from appropriation only under 1913 land laws & from sales under US 7455-
33	11 1/4	11 1/2	11 3/4	See map					
					BLM O CI Mult Use	R 3342	2/7/1958		Sage from Sec Loc CI BLM P 149/1951

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## ACQUIRED LANDS

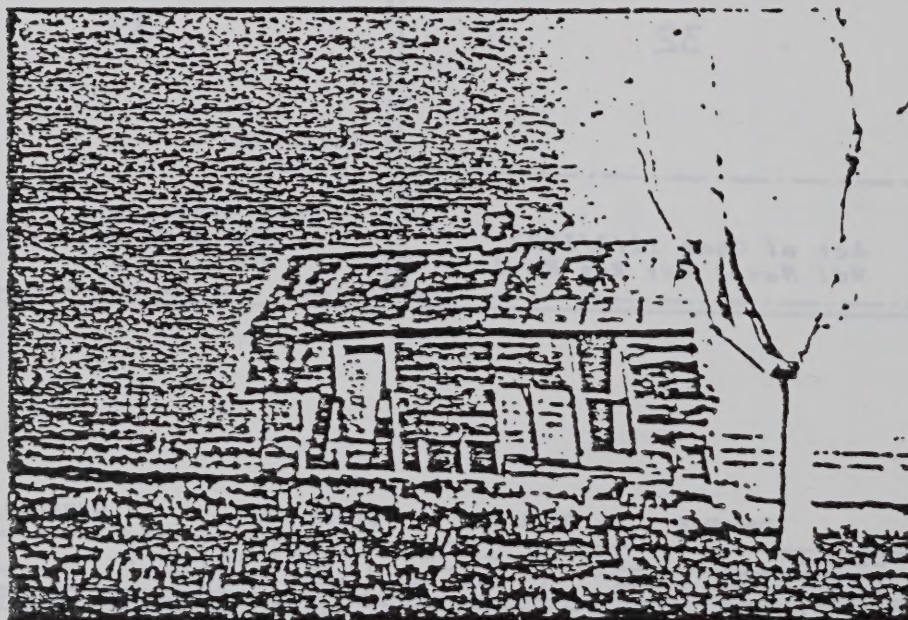
The United States occasionally acquires lands which had been previously patented. Such lands are referred to as acquired lands if obtained by gift, purchase or condemnation. Where the bureau has the acquisition information, such acquired lands are shaded as shown on the adjacent illustrations. Shaded areas indicate the United States has an acquired surface interest or an acquired mineral interest or both. The type of acquisition is shown by the notations in that area.

Acquired minerals are subject to lease or permit under a different act than minerals which have always been in government ownership.

Records of lands acquired by federal agencies other than the Bureau of Land Management may not always

be available in the BLM offices. However, the bureau usually can obtain the ownership status of acquired lands and minerals under jurisdiction of another federal agency if furnished a specific description of the land and the name of the agency.

Required lands should not be confused with reconveyed lands. Lands reconveyed to the United States under the public land laws are not shown with the shading as are the acquired lands. Reconveyed lands are annotated "WD Recon" which means the land was reconveyed to the United States with a warranty deed. If the mineral estate was also reconveyed or never left the United States the annotation will also contain this information.



The "Dust Bowl" in the nineteen-thirties was one of the biggest reasons for the United States having Acquired Lands.



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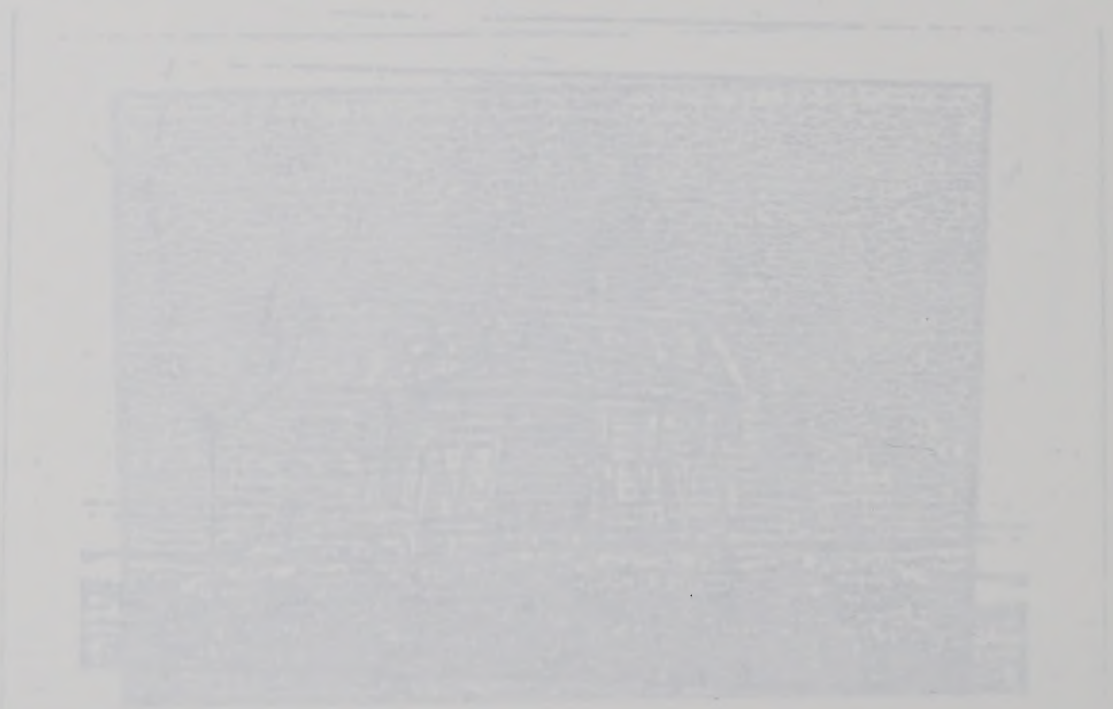


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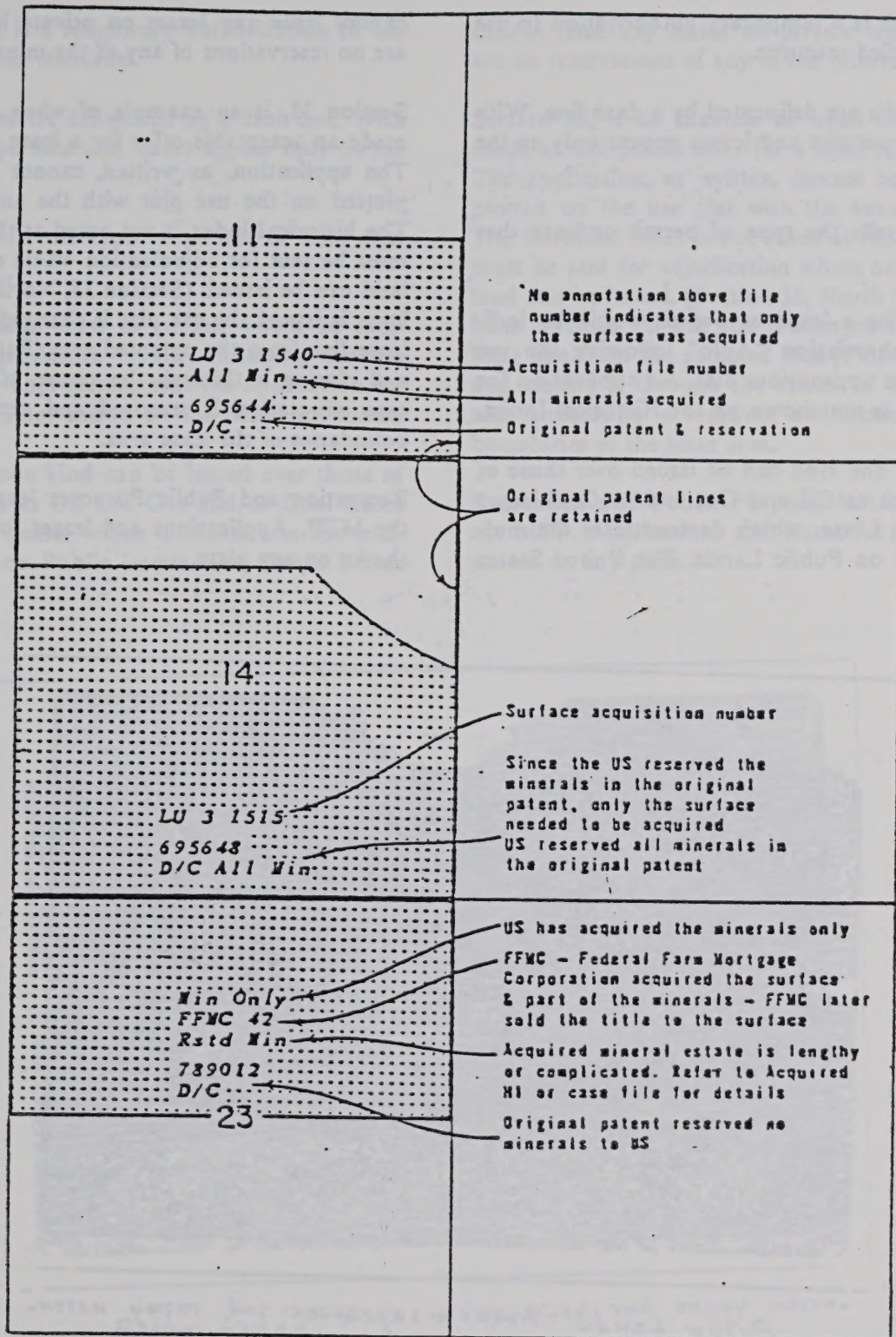
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# ACQUIRED LANDS



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SUBDIVISION				ACRES	DATE OF SURVEY	DATE OF ACTION	DATE POSTED	REMARKS
10%	20%	30%	40%					
11	11	11	11	463.48	10 to 15	LU 3 1515	8-7-1947	Title acquired 5/18/1947
14	14	14	14	329.80	10 to 15	LU 3 1540	8-7-1947	Title acquired 5/18/1947
23	23	23	23	329.80	10 to 15	FFMC 42	8-7-1947	Title to coal, 2nd & 3rd interest of 88

161  
 135644



# LEASES AND PERMITS

(General)

A lease or permit is a temporary authorization to use the land or specified resource.

Leases and permits are delineated by a dash line. With a few exceptions permits and leases appear only on the Use Plats.

The annotation tells the type of permit or lease that has been issued.

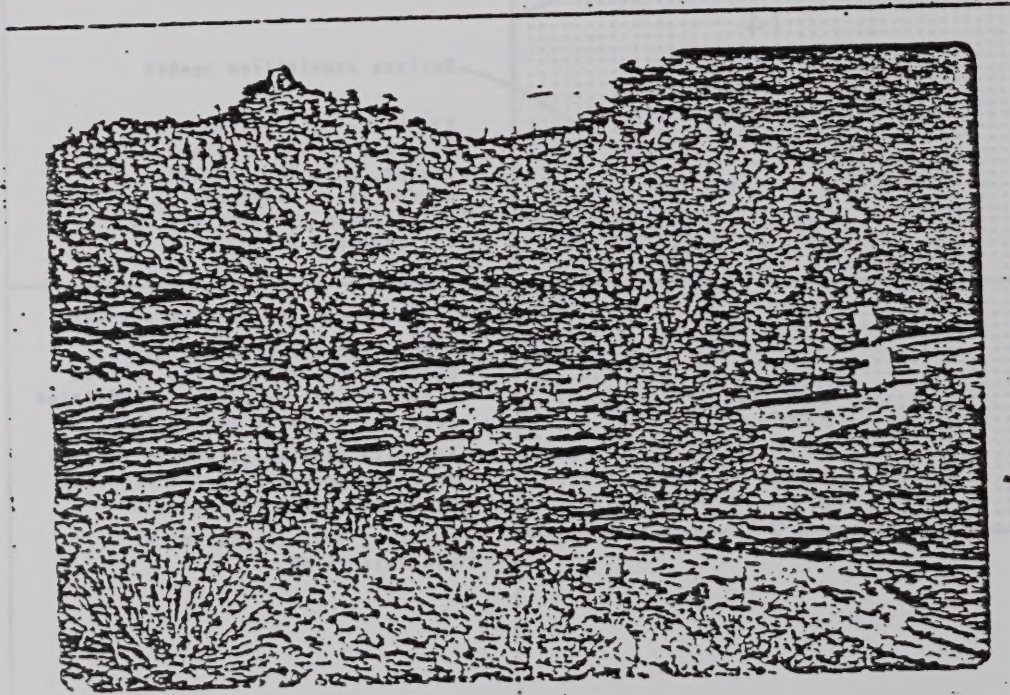
An application for a lease or permit would be indicated by the abbreviation "Apln" following the use annotation on the appropriate plat. An application for a lease or permit is not shown on the Historical Index.

Certain leases of one kind can be issued over those of another kind such as Oil and Gas and/or Coal leases within a Grazing Lease, which demonstrates the multiple use concept on Public Lands. The United States

cannot issue any leases on private lands where there are no reservations of any of the mineral estate.

Section 35, is an example of when an applicant has made an acceptable offer for a lease (Section 35, All). The application, as written, cannot be issued, but is plotted on the use plat with the annotation "Apln". The historical index is not noted at this time. The case must be sent for adjudication where only the available land can be issued. (Section 35, North half). When the lease is issued the use plat is changed by removing the lease line from the patented area (Patent Number 288) and closing it through the center of Section 35. The case annotation is removed and centered within the boundaries of the lease area.

Recreation and Public Purposes leases are shown on the MTP. Applications and leases for grazing are not shown on any plats.



*Public Lands have many uses and many users.*



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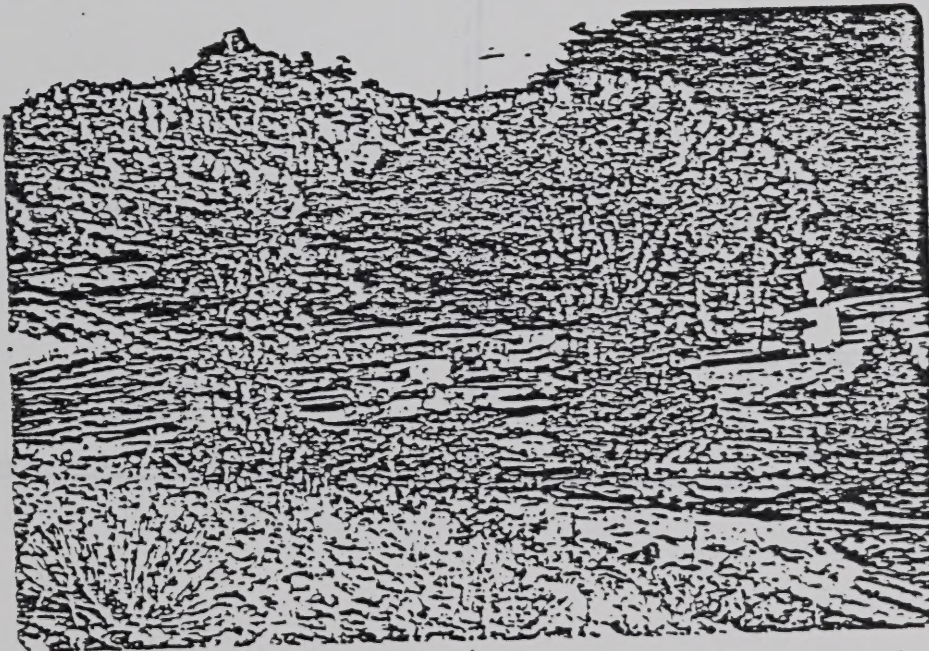
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*Public Lands have many uses and many users.*

680-161  
H 19537







Diagram illustrating a water distribution system layout with four basins (25, 26, 35, 36) and associated flow paths.

**Basin 26 (Top Left):**

- Flow Path: C 27940 Coal Pr Par
- Flow Path: 26

**Basin 25 (Top Right):**

- Flow Path: C 12369 OG Lse
- Flow Path: 25

**Basin 35 (Bottom Left):**

- Flow Path: C 80226 OG Lse Apla
- Flow Path: 288

**Basin 36 (Bottom Right):**

- Flow Path: 1612
- Flow Path: 46
- Flow Path: 36
- Flow Path: 922
- Flow Path: C 36925 RBPP Lse

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## OIL AND GAS SIMULTANEOUS LEASING

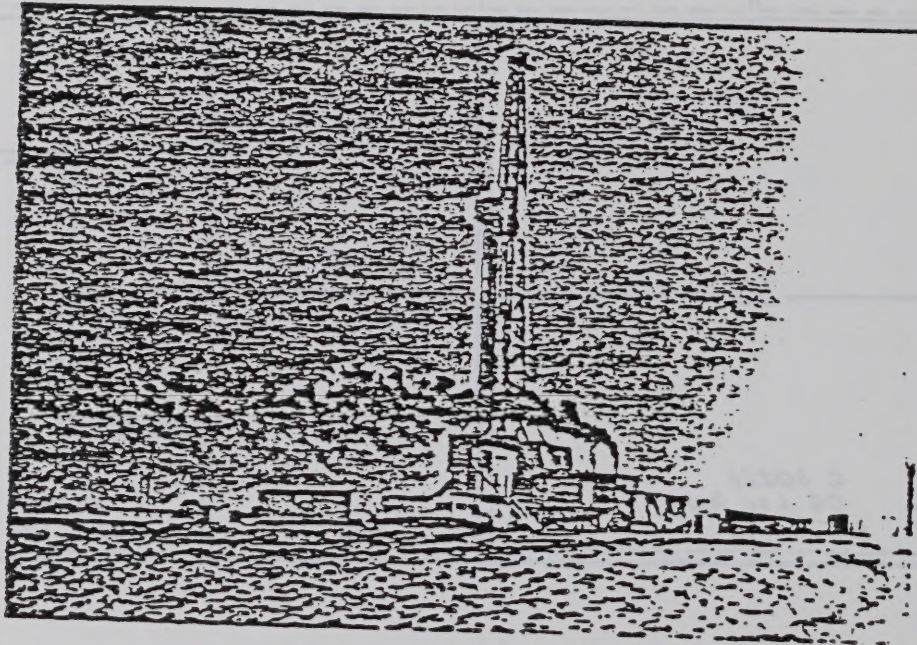
When an Oil and Gas Lease has expired on a partial of land and before it is relisted it is marked NOL (Not Open for Leasing) as shown in Section 17. See "Code of Federal Regulations", 43.CFR3112. A copy of these regulations is available from any BLM State Office in Circular No. 2357 Oil and Gas.

Section 18 cannot have a lease issued in that area because of the withdrawal for the National Park. When applying for a lease the user should always check the case documents for what minerals are affected by a withdrawal, or classification.

Case number U 32521 in Section 19 is an expired lease that has been relisted for an upcoming OG Simultaneous Drawing.

Patented land, such as Patent Number 7086 in Section 19, is not listed in the simultaneous partial because the United States does not have an interest of any kind on this land. The possibility exists that this land can be leased privately from the present owners.

Even though the north half of the northeast quarter is patented, it can be included in the OG Lease (No. 49395) because the United States has retained the mineral estate, which includes oil and gas.



*The energy needs of the nation requires that there be a continuous search for new sources.*



## OIL AND GAS SIMULTANEOUS LEASING

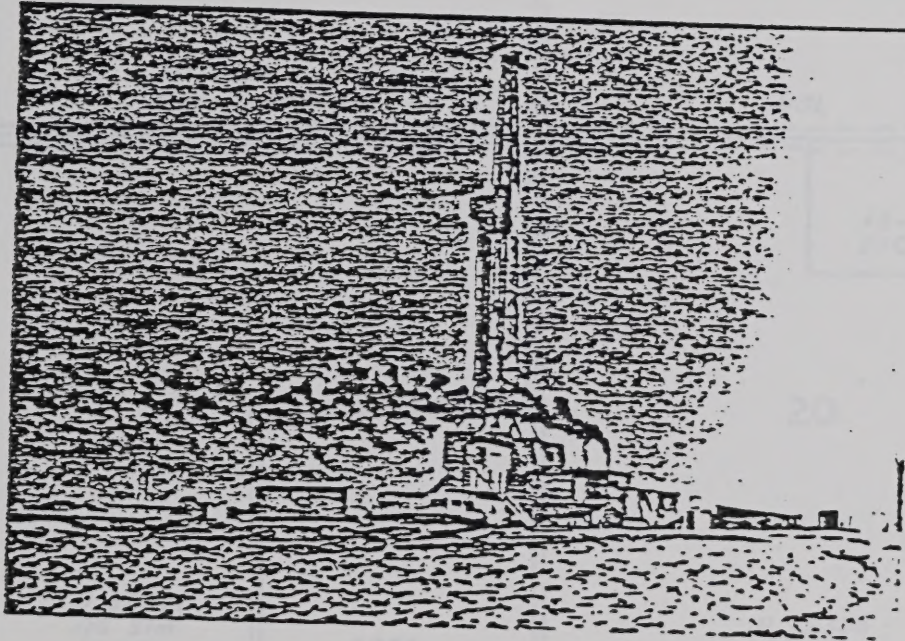
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On the 15th of July, the Olympic Games were held at the stadium in London. The weather was very hot and the sun was shining brightly. The games were very interesting and the athletes were very good. The United States team did very well and won many medals. The British team also did well and won many medals. The games were a great success and the athletes were very happy.

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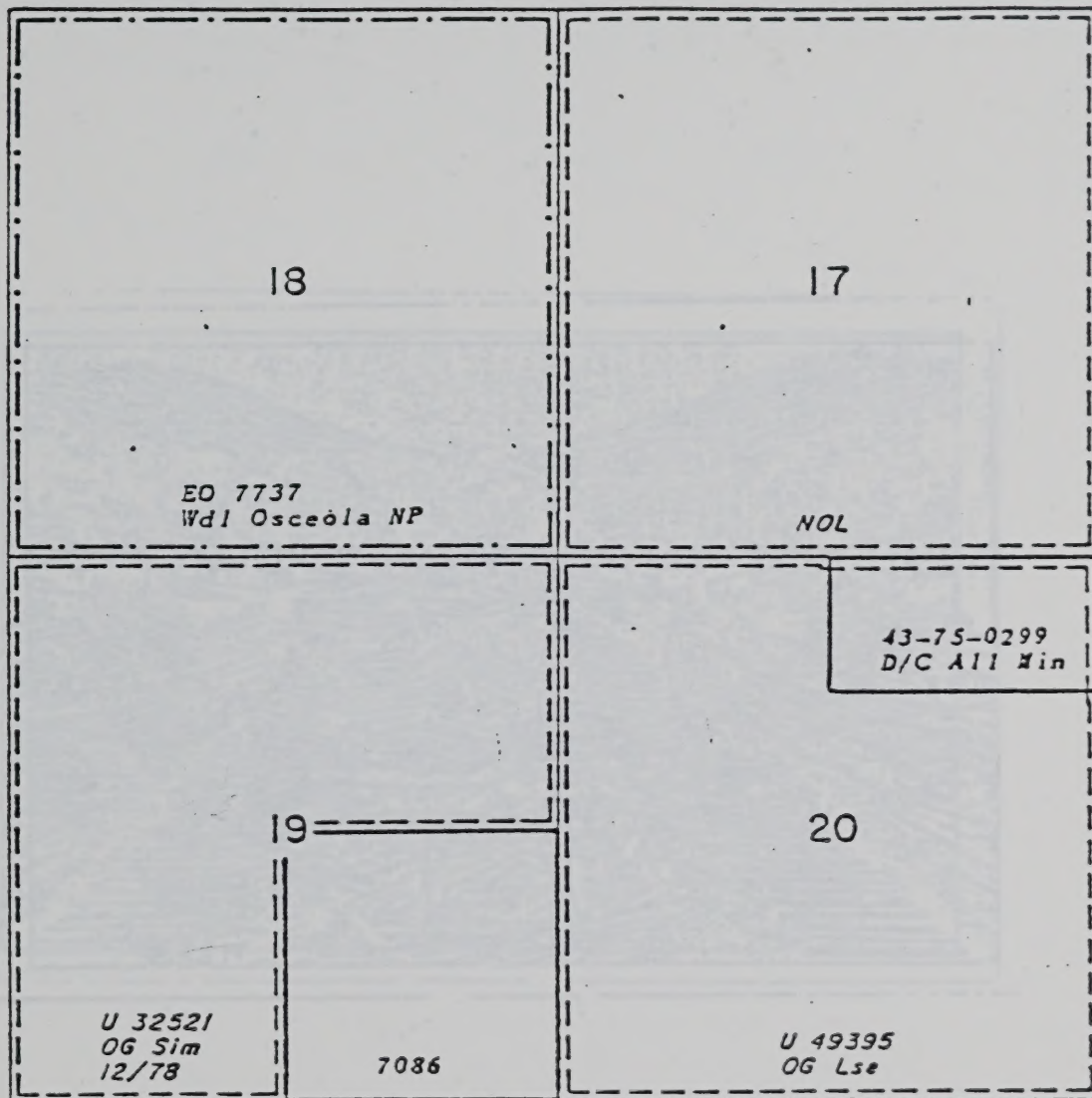
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# OIL AND GAS SIMULTANEOUS LEASING



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## RIGHT OF WAY

A right of way is a permit or easement which authorizes the use of public lands for certain specified purposes, such as railroads, roads, pipe lines, telephone lines, transmission lines, ditches, reservoirs, and communications sites.

Width shown is from centerline, i.e., road shown in Section 28 has a total width of 50 feet. Annotations

not showing width may be variable on each side of the centerline.

It should be emphasized that right-of way locations shown are approximate only. Details and exact locations can be found in related case files.



*Railroads were originally given grants of land (RRG) but in later years they were only given a right of way*

630-161  
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*Railroads were originally given grants of land (RRG) but in later years they were only given a right of way*



any other way, and the right of way is not to be used for any other purpose than the use for which it was granted. The right of way is not to be used for any other purpose than the use for which it was granted. The right of way is not to be used for any other purpose than the use for which it was granted.

Any person who is guilty of any offense under this section shall be liable to a fine of not more than \$100 or to imprisonment for not more than 60 days, or to both such fine and imprisonment. Any person who is guilty of any offense under this section shall be liable to a fine of not more than \$100 or to imprisonment for not more than 60 days, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

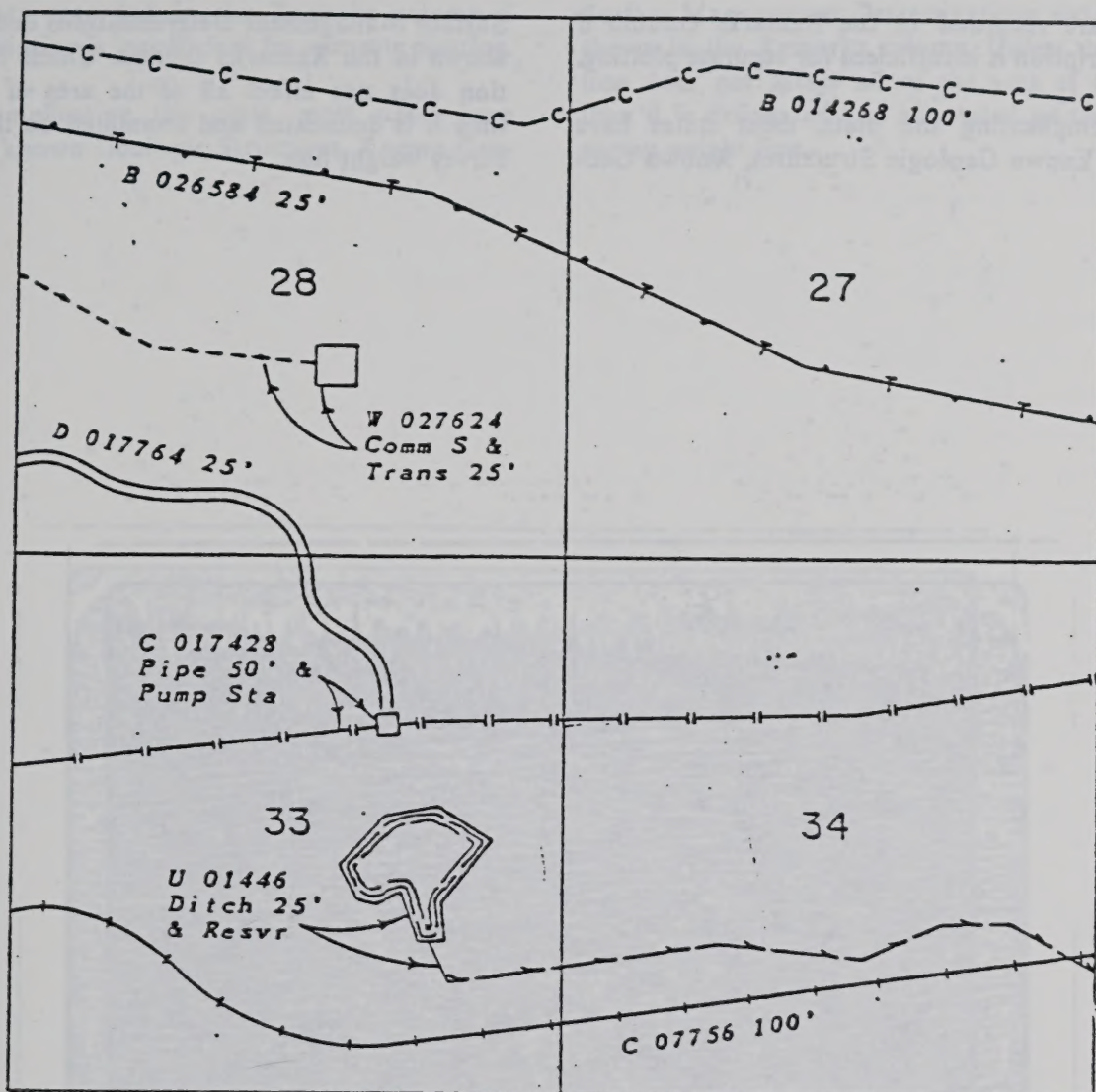


It is the policy of the State to encourage the development of the State's natural resources and to protect the State's natural resources from depletion and destruction. It is the policy of the State to encourage the development of the State's natural resources and to protect the State's natural resources from depletion and destruction.

100-101  
44222

100-101  
44222





TOWNSHIP 0 TH RANGE ST OF THE MERIDIAN.

SECTION	SUBDIVISION				ACRES	TIME OF SURVEY - DATE - PREPARED BY: SURVEYOR	NORMAL FILE NUMBER	DATE OF ACTING	DATE POSTED	REMARKS - REMARKS - E.G. DATE SURVEYED, TEMPERATURE, REQUESTED, OR MODIFIED
	10%	20%	30%	40%						
	50%	60%	70%	80%						
33										
34					Sudden bend	2 T Side of rd	C 87756	9 3 1899		Proof of Construction 3 3 1903
37	15165	1518								
38	15165	1518				2 T Corridor	9 91428	3 2 1935		26. Prop line, Trans line

480-16  
#149537



RIGHT HAND COLUMN ON PLAT  
POPULARLY REFERRED TO AS "REMARKS COLUMN"

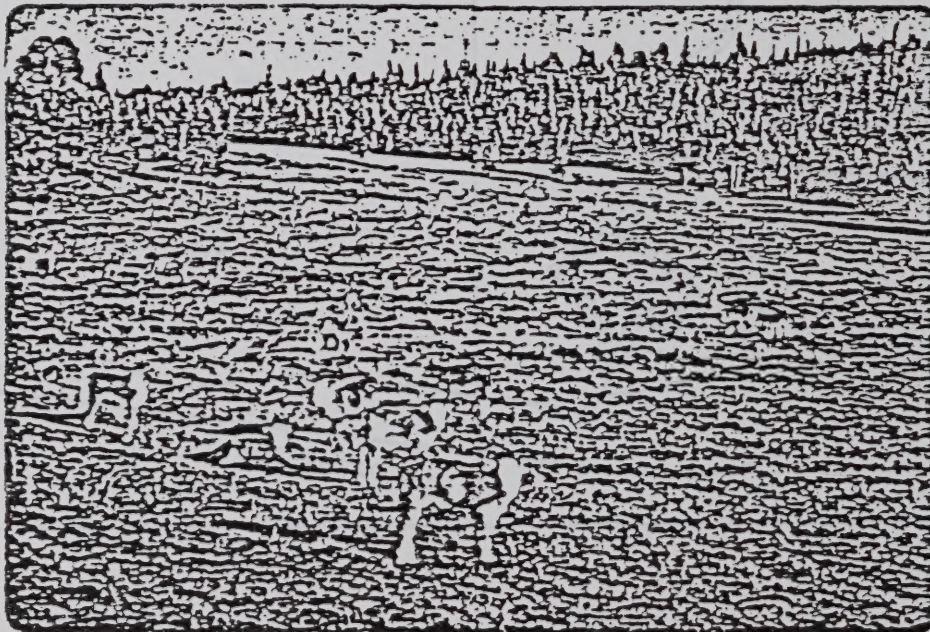
Status documents that cover an entire township are recorded in the right hand column instead of being plotted on the plats.

Documents are recorded in the Remarks column if the land description is insufficient for accurate plotting.

To avoid complicating the plats, most states have recorded the Known Geologic Structures, Known Geo-

thermal Resource Areas, Unit Agreements, and certain classification actions in the Remarks column instead of delineating the areas on the plats.

Surface Management Determinations under PL 167 are shown in the Remarks column. Unless the determination does not affect all of the area of the township then it is delineated and annotated on the plat with a survey weight line.



*There can be many stipulations on land of this type.*

680-16  
H195



## RIGHT HAND COLUMN ON PLAT POPULARLY REFERRED TO AS "REMARKS COLUMN"

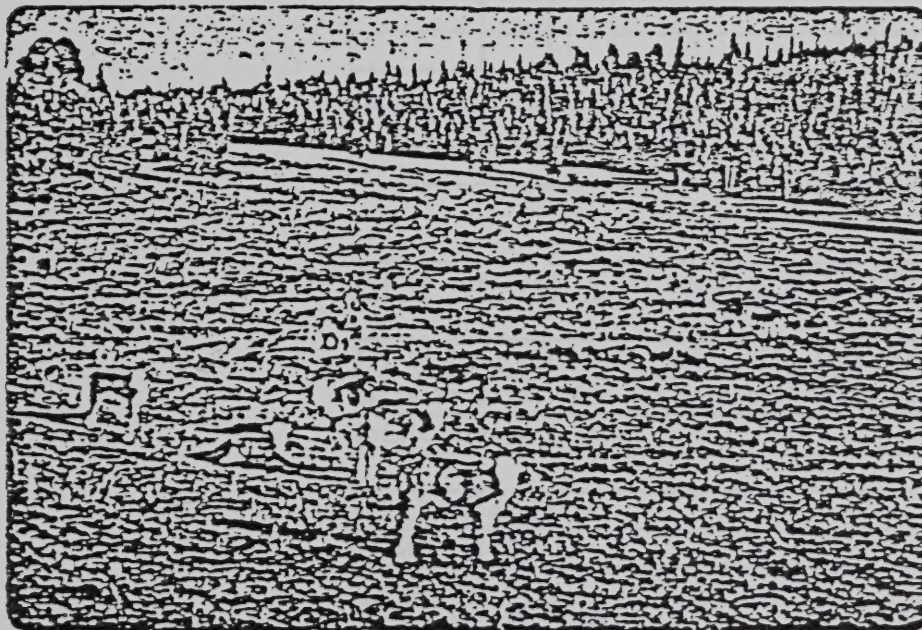
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680-16  
H195







# MONTANA

STATUS OF PUBLIC DOMAIN  
LAND AND MINERAL TITLES

MT PLAT

[illegible]

All Tp included in Wdl Coconino NF EO 1109 5/2/1912

Act of Cong 10/2/1968, all public land within 1/4 mile  
of Snake River, Wdn for potential addition to Wild and  
Scenic Rivers System

X6S, Gayilan Field

Sec 17: All

Sec 18: E

Sec 19: Ex. Ex

Sec 20: NY, NEY

X67A, Calistoga Springs # 077898 11/3/1958

Sec 11: NY

Sec 12: NNY

UA, Echo Spring 24.

Sec 14: All

Sec 15: All

W 042638 Det PL 167 completed 10/10/1960. All PD surface  
Mgmt by BLM excluding

Sec 12: SEX. Kathy Lode No 1



KLAMATH COUNTY  
LAKEVIEW

STATUS OF PUBLIC DOMAIN  
LAND AND MINERAL TITLESMT PLAT[illegible]

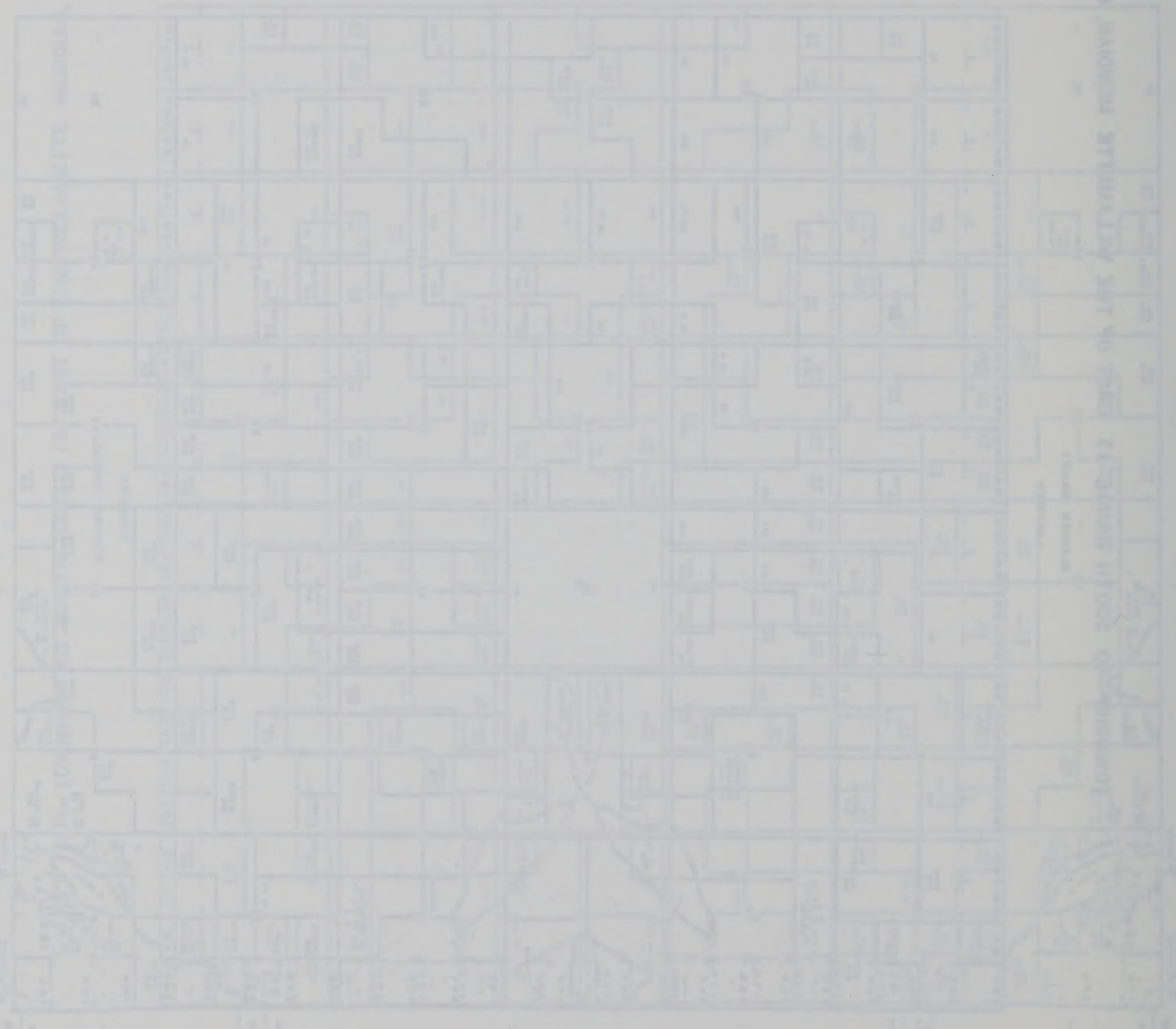
THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250

[illegible][illegible]









Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
101	Office	100
102	Office	100
103	Office	100
104	Office	100
105	Office	100
106	Office	100
107	Office	100
108	Office	100
109	Office	100
110	Office	100

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
201	Office	100
202	Office	100
203	Office	100
204	Office	100
205	Office	100
206	Office	100
207	Office	100
208	Office	100
209	Office	100
210	Office	100

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
301	Office	100
302	Office	100
303	Office	100
304	Office	100
305	Office	100
306	Office	100
307	Office	100
308	Office	100
309	Office	100
310	Office	100

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
401	Office	100
402	Office	100
403	Office	100
404	Office	100
405	Office	100
406	Office	100
407	Office	100
408	Office	100
409	Office	100
410	Office	100

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
501	Office	100
502	Office	100
503	Office	100
504	Office	100
505	Office	100
506	Office	100
507	Office	100
508	Office	100
509	Office	100
510	Office	100

Room No.	Room Name	Area (sq. ft.)
601	Office	100
602	Office	100
603	Office	100
604	Office	100
605	Office	100
606	Office	100
607	Office	100
608	Office	100
609	Office	100
610	Office	100

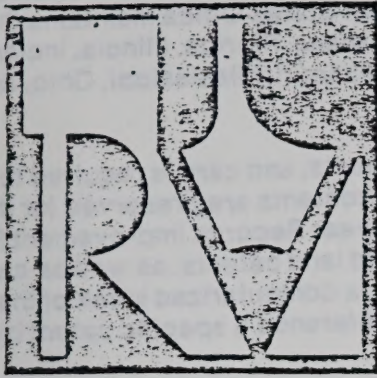












# BLM Eastern States Land Records

U.S. Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management

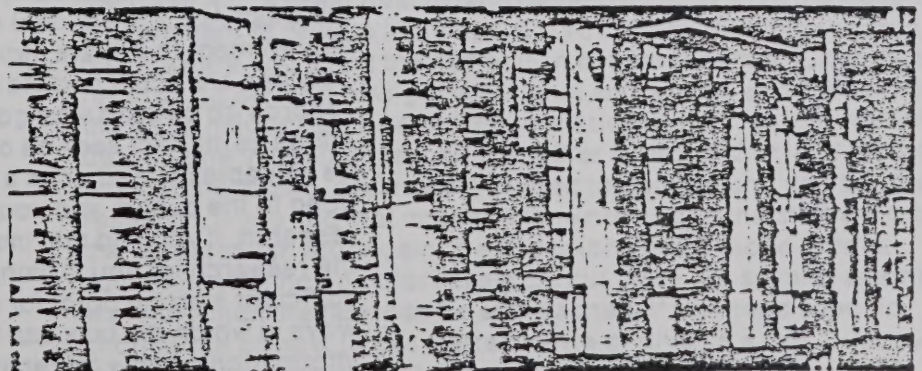
## Land Records: Where They Came From, How We Got Them

As the United States expanded westward from the original 13 colonies, the Continental Congress recognized the need for an orderly system of surveying and recording new Federal lands. The Ordinance of 1785 established the rectangular survey system and authorized the Treasury Department to sell public lands for revenue. The General Land Office (GLO) was established within the Treasury Department in 1812 to take charge of all survey and land title records. In 1946, GLO was merged with the U.S. Grazing Service to form the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) under the Department of the Interior. BLM took custody of the land records, which have since grown to include some 7.5 million ownership titles covering 1.5 billion acres of Federal land. Over five million of these documents are stored and maintained at BLM's Eastern States Office.

## What Records We Maintain

The first land records to develop from the Ordinance of 1785 were survey field notes. Government surveys began in Ohio and progressed westward as more territory opened up for settlement. Survey field notes are the product of the surveyor himself; they describe the survey performed, and may include the names of settlers living in the survey area and a variety of descriptions of land formations, climate, soil, and plant and animal life. Survey plats are drawings of the boundaries created by each survey. Plats are prepared by draftsmen who base their drawings on information in the field notes and sketches. The earliest survey records date back to the 18th century; records produced today still follow the same basic format.

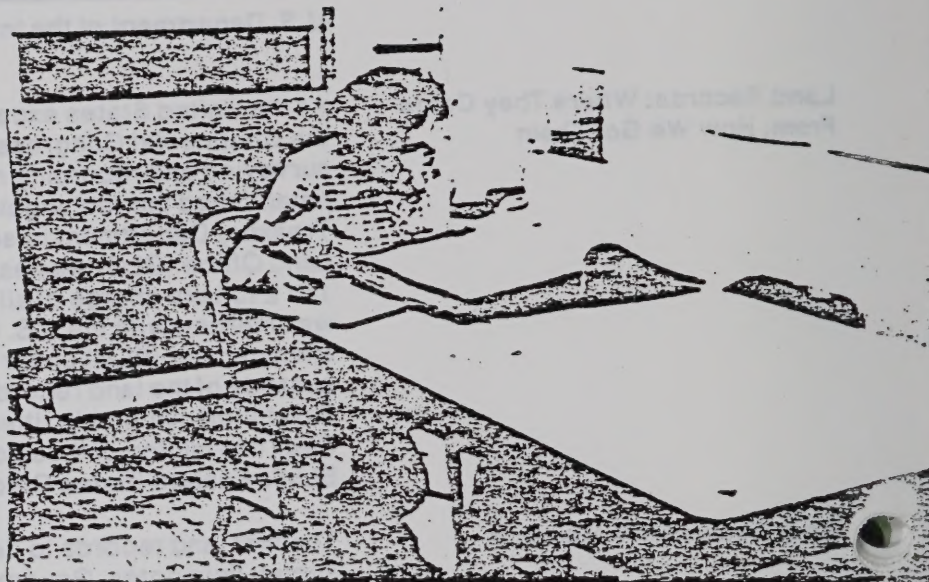
Once the public domain was surveyed, the government could begin to transfer title of land parcels to private citizens, companies and local governments. Titles are transferred through patents (deeds) granted by the Federal Government. Records of these patents and other statements of title are contained in tract books. First developed around 1800 and maintained in the local land offices, tract books still





serve as the essential reference source for all transactions involving public lands. They tell who obtained what land from the Federal Government, and when. The Eastern States Office maintains the tract books for 13 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Mississippi, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

Land records are historical documents, and care is required to maintain them. To make sure their contents are preserved for the future, BLM is in the midst of a ten-year Records Improvement Project to microfilm land status records and land patents, as well as cadastral survey notes and plats. Eventually, a computerized index of the microfilm will make it possible to reference a specific patent by any of several means.



### **If We've Got It, You Can Get It**

The Eastern States Office furnishes certified photostat copies of hundreds of patents every month. Most requests for copies come from title attorneys and abstract companies who, before they insure title on a particular tract of land, want to make sure the Federal Government no longer owns it. A large number of requests come from the southern states, where the burning of county courthouses during the Civil War caused the loss of many title records. If you specify the subdivision, section, township and range, BLM's records staff can locate the patent and supply a copy. The name of the landowner alone is not sufficient, since the land records of most states are not indexed by name.

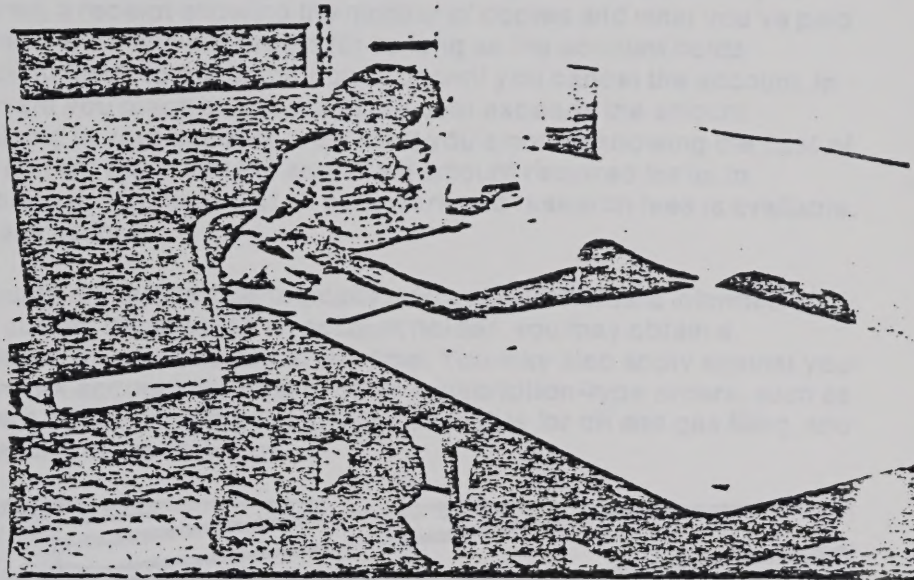
### **We Can Help You Discover Your Past**

In addition to supplying information about land titles, the Eastern States Office performs genealogical and historical research for persons interested in tracing their family's past. Under numerous laws, such as the military bounty land warrant acts, the Homestead Act, and the Cash Act, a great deal of land passed directly from the Federal Government to private individuals. If you check our land records, chances are you'll find the name of an ancestor or two. Often these records go beyond who got what land, and when—and mention such things as military service or family relationships. This information can be valuable in itself or as a clue to other sources. Our land records are open to the public, and you are invited to come in and do your own research. If you find that impossible, write us and the staff will perform the research for you. Again, the ancestor's name alone is not a sufficient starting point for research, but there are several alternate ways in which the task can be approached. If you need specific information on how to get started, write or give us a call. Direct your request to the attention of Genealogical/Historical Research.



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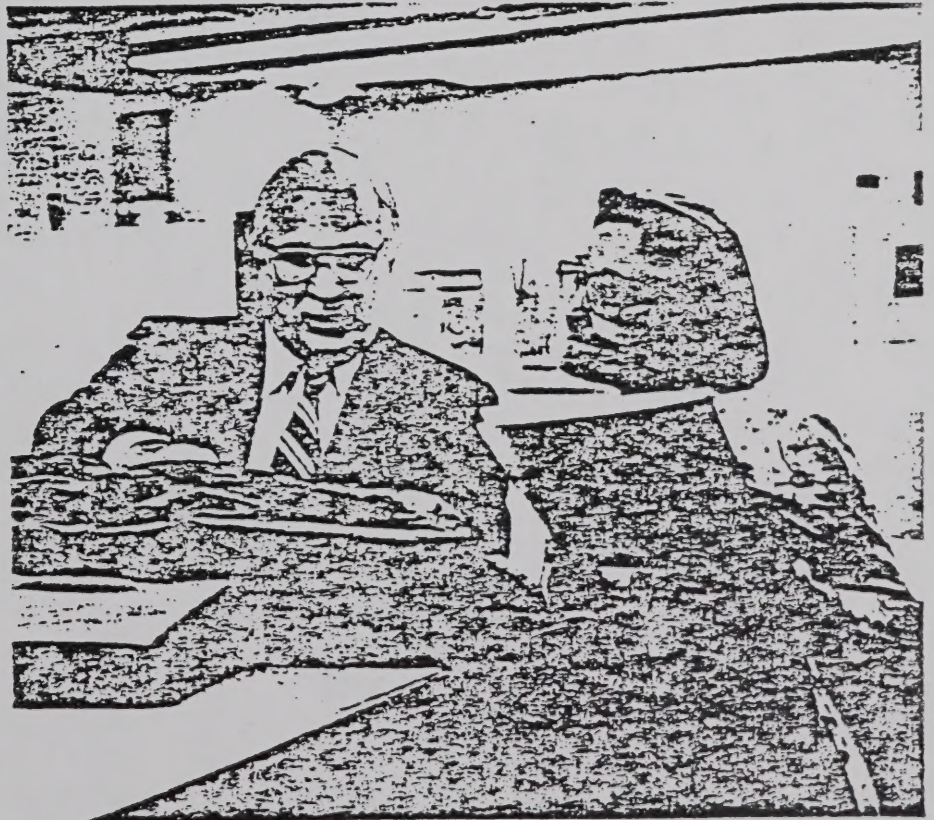




## It Costs, Of Course

Fees are not high, but the public is charged for copy work and time spent on research by our staff. If you expect to make numerous requests for research and photostat copies, we encourage you to establish a copywork Advance Deposit Account. Account holders get quick service; document reproductions are furnished immediately upon receipt of their orders. Since regulations require that payment be received before the requested material is sent out, a copywork account will greatly expedite your order. Any sum is sufficient to establish an account. When we receive your order, we deduct the fee from your account balance and furnish, along with the material you ordered, a receipt showing the number of copies and what you've paid for them. We'll fill your orders for as long as the account holds sufficient funds to cover their cost, or until you cancel the account. In the event you place an order and the cost exceeds the amount remaining in your account, we'll send you a notice showing the cost of your current order and the additional amount required for us to complete it. A schedule of all copywork and research fees is available. Just ask us for it.

Accounts are audited periodically, and account holders informed of their current balance. As an account holder, you may obtain a statement of your account at any time. You may also apply against your copywork account the cost of other subscription-type orders, such as Eastern States' monthly list of lands available for oil and gas filing, and the results of the drawings.



## Even If We Don't Have It, Someone Else Will

Because the original 13 colonies and their territories were not a part of the Federal lands acquired during national expansion, we do not maintain the land records of 18 eastern states and the District of Columbia. These states are Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Inquiries concerning land records for these states should be directed to the



Fees are not high, but the public is charged for copy work and time spent on research by our staff. If you expect to make numerous requests for research and photocopy copies, we encourage you to establish a copywork advance deposit account. Account holders get quick service; document reproductions are furnished immediately upon receipt of their orders. Since regulations require that payment be received before the requested material is sent out, a copywork account will greatly expedite your order. Any sum is sufficient to establish an account. When we receive your order, we debit the fee from your account balance and furnish, along with the material you ordered, a receipt showing the number of copies and what you've paid for them. We'll bill your order for as long as the account holds sufficient funds to cover their cost, or until you cancel the account. If the amount you place on order and the cost exceeds the amount remaining in your account, we'll send you a notice showing the cost of your current order and the additional amount required for us to complete it. A schedule of all copywork and research fees is available. Just ask us for it.

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Because the original 13 colonies and their territories were not a part of the Federal lands acquired during national expansion, we do not maintain the land records of 13 eastern states and the District of Columbia. These states are Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. Because







